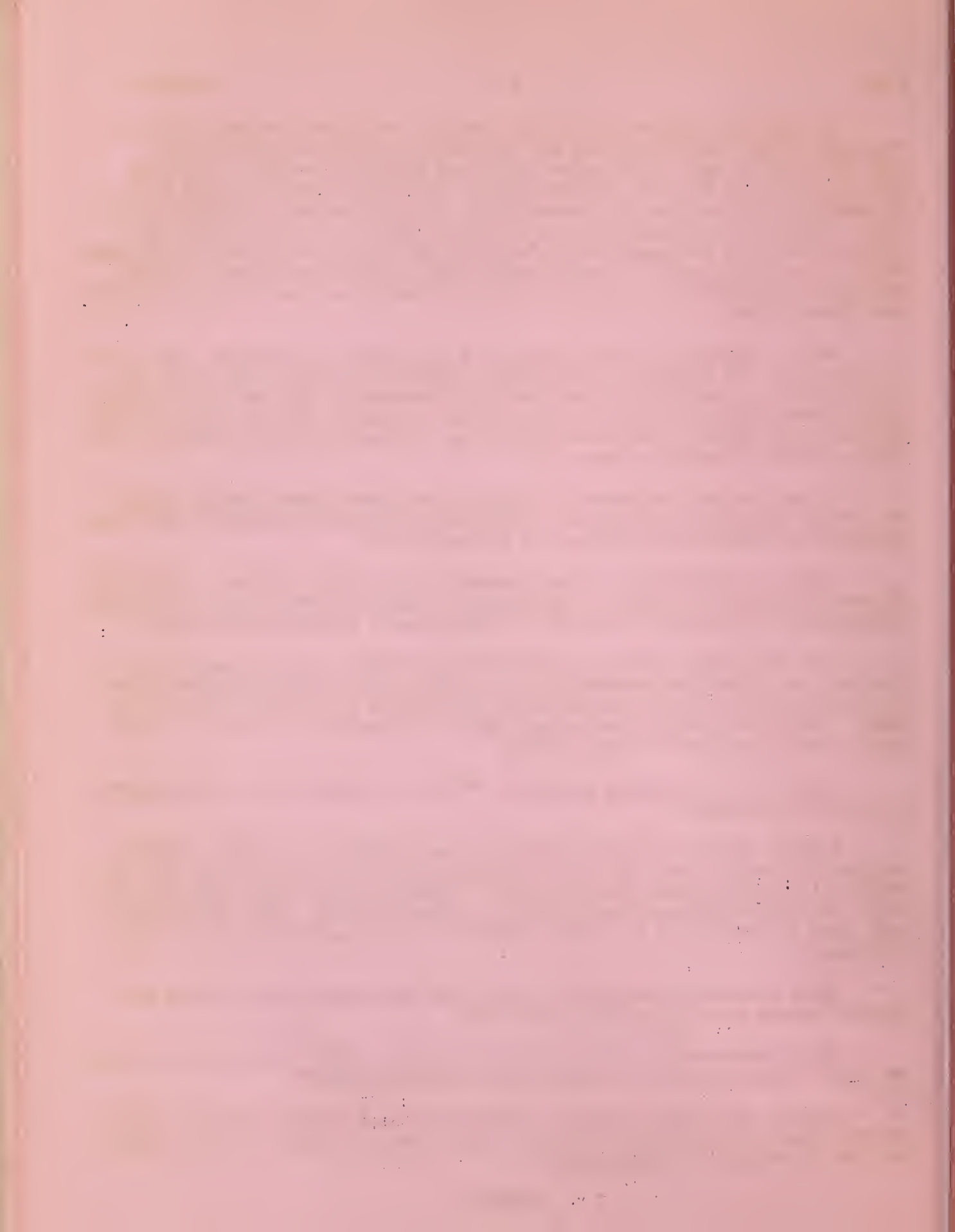


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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Wednesday, September 14, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "FOOD SHOPPING TIPS." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, and the Consumers' Counsel, Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

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Listeners, if you are doing the family marketing this month, you'll be wise to mind your P's and Q's, especially your P's. For P stands for pears, fresh prunes, plums, and green peppers--all foods at their peak in September markets. September is also the season for figs and the month when more cabbage, onions, potatoes, and celery from the late-producing States come on the market. The season for brussels sprouts, cranberries and Florida grapefruit opens this month, too. But melons, peaches, and green corn are on the wane.

The 1938 pear crop is slightly larger than last year's record crop! So you can be pretty certain that the price of pears will be lower. As you know, the Pacific Coast States grow the bulk of our pears. Usually the fruit is picked when still unripe and then ripened in cool, dark rooms at markets. The pear is one of the few fruits that is better if ripened off the tree. Some people believe that the only way to choose a ripe pear is by color. But they are mistaken because some varieties are yellow when they are "green", while others are ripe when they are green in color or greenish yellow. Good quality pears are fairly firm but not hard, have no blemishes, are clean and not misshapen.

Now a little news about apples. The apple crop this year will probably be about a third smaller than last year's, but apple prices aren't likely to be up much because consumer incomes are lower. If you are buying apples for cooking, tart or slightly acid varieties are best. For baking, Rome Beauty and Rhode Island Greenings are excellent. The best sizes for baking are those packed 96 or less to a box, but for general use those packed 113 to 133 per box -- those which measure 2 and a half or 2 and three-fourths inches in diameter are best. The grade of the apples as well as the variety and number to a box are marked on the box they are shipped in. Western boxed apples are graded either as Extra Fancy, Fancy, or C Grade, while most apples grown east of the Rockies are sold under U. S. Grades.

Now about grapes. So far there have been fewer grapes than last year yet lower prices. About 90 percent of the annual grape crop comes from California. Most of the early shipments from that State are seedless grapes. By the way, when you are buying grapes, color is your best guide to sugar content and flavor. White or green grapes usually are at their best when they are turning amber color. Be sure, too, that the individual grapes are plump and firmly attached to the stem and that the bunches look fresh. A few small, sunburned, wrinkled or unripe berries on a bunch don't affect the quality or flavor of the bunch as a whole.

So much for fruit and vegetable news. Now about butter and cheese, chickens and eggs.

Butter prices remained practically unchanged all during August and it looks as if butter won't go up as much in price as it usually does the last of the year. Since early June when the seasonal low in prices was reached, the retail price of butter in New York has gone up only 2 cents a pound. During the last week of August, butter was 8 cents a pound less than a year ago. Storage holdings of butter are the largest on record--about 50 percent larger than a year ago. This storage butter comes on the market in the fall and winter months when milk and butter production is low.

Speaking of record storage holdings reminds me of cheese. Cheese in storage is making a record, too, this year. On the first of this month there was more cheese in cold storage in this country than ever before. The latest figures I have show 15 percent more American cheese in storage this year than last and about the same amount of Swiss cheese. Guess it's time for all good housewives to line up their cheese recipes and treat their families to Welsh rabbit, cheese custard and cheese dreams.

From cheese let's turn to chickens. September is the month to begin having roast chicken for Sunday dinner. For this month birds large enough for roasting are starting to market and will continue in increasing numbers during the rest of the year. As you probably know, birds under a year old weighing over 3 and a half pounds usually are classed as roasters, while those from 2 and a half to 3 and a half are fryers, and those under 2 and a half are broilers. To make your money go farthest when you are buying chicken, consider how much edible meat you are getting rather than the total weight of the bird. A dressed broiler, for example, is from 56 to 60 percent meat while a fryer is from 63 to 67 percent meat and a roaster from 62 to 64 percent. From this you can see that a fryer has a larger proportion of edible meat than a roaster and a roaster has more than a broiler.

By the way, do you know the Government grades for poultry? There are 3-- A and B and C. Grade A is also called U. S. Prime; Grade B is U. S. Choice; and Grade C is U. S. Commercial.

Now about eggs. They're still going up in price and they will probably keep on going up through November. Highest egg prices will probably come in November. There are fewer eggs in storage than at any time on record and apparently hens are going to lay fewer than they did in 1937 so you'll pay more for eggs than you did last year.

That concludes our tips for the family food-shopper for today. More in a couple of weeks.

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